

33. (New) A method for identifying a biological sample associated with a container, comprising:

providing a container suitable for receiving a biological sample;
marking said container with a universally unique identifier;
placing a biological sample in said container;
associating said universally unique identifier with sample information relating to said biological sample; and
utilizing said universally unique identifier to identify said biological sample.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said universally unique identifier comprises one or more first areas on an outer surface of said container having a first specular reflectance which differs from a second specular reflectance of a second area adjacent to said first area.

35. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein said first specular reflectance is less than said second specular reflectance.

36. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein said marking step comprises laser etching said outer surface of said container to define said one or more first areas.

37. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein said marking step comprises abrading said outer surface of said container to define said one or more first areas.

38. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein said marking step comprises applying a thin film member to said outer surface of said container.

39. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein said first specular reflectance is greater than said second specular reflectance.

40. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein said marking step comprises melting said outer surface to define said one or more first areas.

41. (New) The method of claim 34, further including detecting said one or more first areas of said outer surface of said container.

42. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein said detecting step comprises projecting light toward said outer surface of said container from a source and sensing light reflected by said container from said source.

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43. (New) A method for identifying a container, comprising:
providing a container having an outer surface;
marking said outer surface of said container with a universally unique identifier comprising one or more areas having a first specular reflectance that differs from a second specular reflectance of said outer surface adjacent to said one or more areas;
detecting said universally unique identifier; and
associating said universally unique identifier with one or more items of information pertaining to use, planned use or contents of said container.

44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein said first specular reflectance is less than said second specular reflectance.

45. (New) The method of 44, wherein said marking step comprises laser etching said outer surface of said container to define said one or more areas.

46. (New) The method of claim 44, wherein said marking step comprises abrading said outer surface of said container to define said one or more areas.

47. (New) The method of claim 44, wherein said marking step comprises applying a thin film member to said outer surface of said container.

48. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein said first specular reflectance is greater than said second specular reflectance.

49. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein said marking step comprises melting said outer surface to define said one or more areas.

50. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein said detecting step comprises the steps of projecting light toward said outer surface of said container from a source and sensing light reflected by said one or more areas and said outer surface adjacent thereto.

REMARKS

By this Amendment, minor errors are being corrected on pages 13, 18 and 19 of the specification. These corrections, which also appear in the attached "Marked-Up Version to Show Changes Made", are self-explanatory and do not introduce new matter.

In addition to the specification amendments, pending claims 1, 3, 4 and 32 are being canceled and replaced with new claims 33-50. Thus, claims 33-50 are now pending in the application.

In the Office Action mailed on June 5, 2001, previous claims 1, 3, 4 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,842,153 (Hulon) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,609,778 (Pulaski et al.). Before discussing these references and the manner